

Health Promotion¹

There are two general thrusts of PRO Shëndetit's work in health promotion: the first is to increase general awareness of health issues and primary health care benefits. The main target audiences are men and women, with messages on topics such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and TB. In addition, these target audiences play important roles as primary care givers and suppliers of knowledge to their families. The second thrust is to have people within communities become more aware of health options and their own capabilities to influence good health - to become active participants. One of the anticipated outcomes of health promotion activities is an increased demand for, and use of, primary health care services. Health promotion is an essential part of the demand-side engine that drives improvement in primary health care.

In order to improve primary health care in Albania, it is essential to build strong linkages between communities and primary health-care providers. Communities have to become participants in the better-health process

There are 374 communes in Albania; it is a huge challenge to build the essential linkages in these communes while continuing to operate within a resource-poor environment. The Ministry of Health and PRO Shëndetit are doing this in the following ways:



There is little-to-no government budget for health promotion within districts, but there are MoH staffs assigned to health promotion. These staffs are playing important roles with PRO Shëndetit in helping to build the necessary linkages between communities and the more formal health system. Selected staff members undergo a TOT course, as shown in the picture on the left, and, in turn, become trainers of

community health-promotion teams. These teams are composed of both local health professionals and motivated community members who believe in the importance of health promotion, and who are committed to helping health improve. The majority of these community-based volunteers are teachers.

As shown in the picture on the right, manuals, teaching aids, and tote bags have been developed for the community health promotion teams to use in villages where they work. PRO Shëndetit currently has



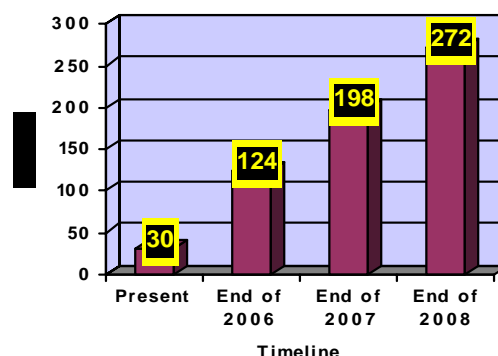
¹ Reference may be made to document as PRO Shëndetit, "Two-pager: Health Promotion"

community teams working with villages in Lezhe, Shkoder, and Korca. During 2006, almost all communes will be covered in PRO Shëndetit's five initial prefectures (in Diber, it is the Red Cross that is doing community-based work through its USAID child-survival project). Also, during 2006, activities will begin in four other prefectures – Gjirokastrë, Vlorë, Fier and Elbasan.

Eight percent of the communes in Albania are currently covered within the scope of community-based health promotion activities (30 communes). By the end of 2006, 33 per cent of Albania's communes will be included in the program and 70 percent by the end of 2008. The numbers associated with this increase are shown in the bar graph on the right.

The human-resource network – health professionals and community members – is the backbone of community-based efforts. Working with this system, PRO Shëndetit will assist with motivation, assure appropriate message presentations, develop and add additional messages, and at the same time expand the system. Developing and expanding the network is the largest program challenge for PRO Shëndetit's health promotion program. The development of messages and materials are essential and are time consuming elements of a good health promotion program. Nevertheless, the motor that makes it all run – now, and in the future for sustainability – is the human-resource network.

Health Promotion Expansion



Some of the health promotion team's work is interwoven with the work of other PRO Shëndetit teams.

- During 2006, the health promotion team will work with MoH, HII, and the health finance team with an information campaign. Technical assistance in health communication will be provided to assist in developing community-focused campaigns to help people better understand the health insurance system – their rights, obligations, and options. It is one of the MoH and PRO Shëndetit efforts to ensure that Albanians understand their options and are enabled to make informed choices regarding their health.
- Also during 2006, the health team will work closely with the MoH and the service delivery team to improve the information and training that service providers receive in health promotion.
 - A health promotion component will be developed for the program the MoH and PRO Shëndetit are using to train general practitioners. This will be developed in collaboration with the MoH and Health Promotion unit in the Institute of Public Health.
 - In addition, the continuing medical education program that the MoH has initiated, with PRO Shëndetit assistance, for nurses and midwives requires the development of health promotion information and training materials.

Health promotion for PRO Shëndetit is clearly two-pronged. It is essential to insure that the public is well informed about health, and that it is enabled to make informed choices about options that are available to them. At the same time, it is important that service providers become more sensitive to the importance of their roles in health promotion, and committed to working with and engaging people in their communities.